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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the practice of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teaching calls for an instructional strategy integrating traditional methods and the communicative approach. Components of traditional teaching methods (grammar instruction, correction, dictation, dialogue, and native language use) are linked with communicative questioning strategies, participation patterns, and interactive materials in a number of classroom techniques and procedures. Focus is on ESL instruction for native speakers of Chinese. Notes on grammar instruction and error correction highlight features of Chinese that contrast or compare with features of English (e.g., word order) or that are challenges for native Chinese speakers (e.g., verb endings), and on effective classroom techniques for addressing them in class. Principles underlying use of classroom participation patterns that support development of communicative competence are also discussed. Grammar-focused tasks that integrate traditional and communicative approaches are then described, including information exchange, dictogloss, and dictocomp tasks. Finally, the role of the native language in the ESL classroom is examined briefly. Contains 65 references. (MSE)

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Tradition and Transition in Second Language Teaching Methodology

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Tradition and Transition in Second Language Teaching Methodology

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The field of English language teaching is in transition. Neither traditional methods of classroom instruction, nor more recent, communicative approaches, when used alone, have been able to address the scope and level of English proficiency required for participation in today's global community. What appears to be needed is a principled integration of the two. This paper will attempt to provide such an integration by drawing on theoretical principles, research findings, and classroom concerns. It will illustrate how components of traditional methods, including grammar instruction, correction, dictation, dialogue, and native language usage, can hold continued significance for language learning, when integrated into communicative questioning strategies, participation patterns, and interactive materials. Throughout the paper, these illustrations of integration will be contextualized, described, and supported through references to research.

The field of language teaching has been one of tradition and transition since its inception hundreds, indeed, by some accounts, thousands of years ago (See Howatt 1984, Kelly 1969, and Richards & Rodgers 1986). The teaching of the English language, although a much newer pursuit than the teaching of languages such as Greek and Latin or Chinese, for example, has already been through many transitions in methodology. What are now considered traditional methods were once the innovations of their time, characterized by the attitudes and values of their creators, who recommended that other educators abandon one method and choose another, with unquestioning optimism, as though this latter were the solution to their classroom concerns. (See Clarke 1982).

In the past fifty years alone, English language teaching has gone through a whirlwind of transitions in its methodology, from grammar translation to direct method, to audiolingualism, to cognitive code, and a host of variations in each. Other methods, whose range of implementation has been much smaller in scope, have also been introduced. Among the most popular of these are Silent Way (Gattegno 1972), Total Physical Response (Asher 1969), Suggestopedia (Lazanov 1978), and Counseling Learning (Curran 1972).

In recent years, the most substantive transition in English language teaching has taken place through a collection of practices, materials, and beliefs about teaching and learning that are known by many different names, for example, communicative methodology, communicative language teaching, and communicative approach. (See again, Richards & Rodgers 1986)

Currently, English teaching methodology is going through yet another transition. This transition is the outgrowth of two highly linked developments in the wider field of language studies: First, there has been a broadening in the scope and diversity of English language use needed for participation in today's global community. This development has been accompanied by a recognition of the need to guide English language learners toward high levels of proficiency, and to do so as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Secondly, there has been a growing body of research that is related to instructional issues. The findings of such research have indicated that learners need a balance of communication, instruction, and correction to guide the learning process. Further, these findings have suggested teaching and learning strategies, materials, and tasks that can integrate these experiences for learners in ways that are efficient and effective.

What is emerging is a methodology that integrates instructional assumptions and components of traditional and communicative methods. It is this integration that will be discussed throughout this paper. First however, the paper will review several traditions that characterize most every method, across transitions and over time.

Traditions in teaching methodology

Each of the above methods has its own distinctive characteristics, of course, but together they share several important commonalities. First, every method purports to be a better method than other methods, and each has commanded both a loyal following of supporters and a disbelieving chorus of skeptics. Indeed, an increasing number of methodologists would argue that none of these methods could possibly meet all of a learner's needs.

As many researchers point out, in addition, language teaching and learning are too complex for any individual method to be able to address for an extended period of time. (See, for example, Kumaravadivelu 1994). Far more critical to a learner's success is a teacher who is informed about learning processes, is aware of, and sensitive to, learner needs, and uses a variety of teaching skills to guide and assist the learning process. (See Prabhu 1990 for further discussion).

Second, each method is affected by the contexts in which it is implemented. Thus, even the most prescriptive or rigid method will be implemented differently, depending on whether it is being used within a second or a foreign language environment, in a large class or on an individual basis, to teach children, adolescents, or adults. Factors such as the educa-

tional and professional background of the teachers also play a critical role in the ways in which a method is employed. (See illustrative studies in Chaudron 1988).

Third, each method embraces a number of goals, concerns, and values that have been sustained over time. These traditional goals, concerns, and values have shaped the ways in which educators have approached each transition in methodology or adapted to transitions forged by others. Thus, these goals, concerns, and values remain a constant in our current English teaching.

What are the common goals concerns, and values that most educators share no matter what methods they use, or choose not to use? These will be described in the following section.

Tradition in goals, concerns, and values

Our goals are numerous, but one of our foremost goals is that our students succeed in their language learning. Whether we are classroom practitioners, methodologists, or policy makers, we feel a responsibility toward helping students toward success. As we try to meet this goal, we share several serious concerns. These concerns cluster around our many responsibilities as educators. We want to make sure that our students meet criteria for success in their current classrooms, as well as in future contexts and potential endeavors that require knowledge and use of another language.

Together, these concerns find particular focus in the case of English. So diverse is English language use in today's global community, that success for our students might mean any number of things, and, all too often, many things, from accomplishing daily classroom tasks and assignments, to passing school-wide examinations, to preparing for the next level of instruction, to excelling on college and university entrance or qualifying examinations, to applying skills in communication for travel, business, academic, and professional pursuits. Together with our students, we share a concern that there might be too much for them to learn and therefore ever so much for us to teach.

Our values are typically focused on a few time cherished traditions. We value the profession of teaching, and the work of teachers. We are sensitive to our role in adjusting our methods so that they are appropriate to the needs, goals, and expectations of our students, and in compliance with the educational and financial resources of the schools, colleges, and universities in which students pursue their language studies.

These are a few of the time honored goals, concerns, and values we bring to the classroom, no matter which method we employ in our teaching. Communicative methodology, too, embraces these goals, concerns, and values. Its goal is student success. It is concerned with students' current, future, and potential needs for language learning. It values the teacher in this process. What sets communicative methodology apart from other methods, however, is its view of the classroom processes through which teach-

ers can best assist students in meeting their goals and addressing their concerns. These processes have been actualized through classroom activities and instructional techniques that have emphasized communication as a way to learn. As will be discussed in the following section, it is this behind communicative methodology which is called into question, and has served to shape the transition in our field at this time.

Transition in English teaching methodology

During this time of transition in language teaching methodology, as traditions of other methodologies interface with communicative methodology, it is important to point out the very robust contributions that communicative methodology has made to the education of language learners. Such contributions help to explain how it is that communicative methodology is leading the transition in English teaching methodology.

Much of communicative methodology was developed as definitions of language competence expanded from grammatical competence to communicative competence, and gave rise to new thinking about the importance of communication to the purposes of language, to the needs of learners, and to the processes of language learning. This modified perspective on language competence has been demonstrated throughout the classroom activities, materials, and instructional strategies of communicative methodology. As such, they focus on language as it is used for purposes of communication, and are designed for learners whose needs extend across the multiplicity of uses noted in the previous section. In addition, these activities, materials, and strategies of communicative methodology have modified the appearance of the language classroom.

Thus, in many communicative classrooms, grammar rules are made available to learners in indirect ways, through reading and listening to meaningful, comprehensible input. These practices often de-emphasize, and even supplant, direct instruction. A tolerance of learners' grammatical errors is frequently preferred over correction thereof, with this latter strategy reserved for errors in the communication of message meaning.

In addition, traditional techniques such as dictation, recitation, drill, and dialog are typically placed in the background, or eliminated entirely in communicative classrooms, in order to emphasize classroom communication and discussion. Teacher-fronted lessons are substituted with activities involving student role plays and problem solving, which engage them in communication as they work in groups and pairs. As teachers try to incorporate communicative strategies throughout their work, they often find it necessary to suppress the use of their students' native language, whether in planning classroom lessons or carrying out classroom activities, even when the native language is shared among the teachers and the students.

In their emphasis on language learning for purposes of communication, the activities, materials, and strategies of communicative methodol-

ogy have come to constitute a rich and enriching curriculum that has assisted many students. Research has shown that they have been more effective than grammar translation, audiolingualism, or other more traditional methods in promoting students' confidence and their fluency in speech and writing, and in accelerating the early stages of their language development. (See, for example, Lightbown and Spada 1993 for review).

These activities, materials, and strategies, however, have not been sufficient to bring learners to the levels of proficiency that many now require for effective English language use. This realization has thus challenged the assumption behind communicative methodology, that a language can be acquired not only FOR purposes of communication, but also THROUGH processes of communication. As recent research has shown, however, this assumption does not seem to apply to all aspects of language learning, particularly those involving complex grammar or sociolinguistic and pragmatic subtleties. This is especially apparent for English language learning and teaching because of its multiple goals, because of the wide range of social contexts in which English is used, and because of the high level of proficiency often required for students' success.

Thus, we find in English teaching methodology the need for yet another transition. Fortunately, as educators, we can be guided by a growing number of research findings on four central processes that contribute to successful language learning. What these findings suggest is that communication is very critical to language learning, but it is not sufficient to meet the needs and goals of many learners.

Indeed, it now appears that some of important dimensions of the learning process might be better served by activities, materials, and instructional practices that integrate communicative methodology with traditional methodologies, and do so in creative, yet highly principled ways. These activities, materials, and instructional practices will be discussed below, first with respect to the research findings that underlie them, and then through a review of the application of these findings to an integrated methodology.

Language learning research: insights and implications

As we participate in yet another transition in language teaching methodology, we can do so, with knowledge of several characteristics of successful second language learning: First, second language learners must have access to second language input that is meaningful and comprehensible. (Krashen, 1985, 1994). When the input is not comprehensible, learners need to be allowed, and encouraged, to indicate their difficulty through clarification questions and expressions. Their interlocutors must respond by adjusting their input. (Long, 1985, Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

As designed in theory, if not always realized in practice, communicative methodology, can create an environment in which such input can be made available. (See again Krahsen 1985, 1994). As will be discussed next, however, communicative methodology would appear to be less effective

with respect to three additional conditions for successful language learning. As a second condition for successful language learning, learners need to focus their attention on the language they are learning. To address this need, they must attend not only to the meaning and comprehensibility of input, but to the structures, sounds, and forms that shape the input. Thus, they must be able to notice the ways in which the sounds and structures of the language relate to the meanings of messages they encode, to understand these relationships of form and meaning in context, and to apply them appropriately in their speech and writing. (Long 1996, Schmidt 1990, 1992). Such opportunities are difficult to obtain through communicative input alone.

More specifically, learners need to know the ways in which concepts such as time, action and activity, space, number, and gender, are encoded in the second language, and how social norms are observed and maintained linguistically. They must also have access to those features of language that carry very little meaning. For English that means features such as articles and redundant endings, for example. (See again, Long 1995). Here, too, it would appear that communication would need to be supplemented and, in some cases, greatly enhanced, in order to assist learners to notice such features.

Third, learners need to produce spoken and written output, and to modify their speech or writing when it is not comprehensible, appropriate, or accurate. (Swain, 1985, 1993). To do this latter requires yet a fourth component: Students need feedback on their production, so that they can modify it toward greater comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy. (Long 1996, Schmidt and Frota 1986). Otherwise, without an appropriate model, they may simply repeat themselves, make the same errors, or come up with new ones, and find that second language learning is even more frustrating and complex than they thought it could be.

Here, too, it would seem that communication alone would be insufficient, perhaps even detrimental, to the learner in the long run. While there could easily be a basis for feedback during communicative interaction, when learners' imprecisions interfered with message meaning, imprecisions in their grammatical form could be overlooked if communication were comprehensible. Thus, there would be no need for learners to modify their production toward greater grammaticality, nor to incorporate new grammatical features toward their language development. For certain features of grammar, some learners might be led to maintain a level of proficiency, characterized by fluency, but not accuracy. (See Higgs and Clifford 1982 for further elaboration of this concern).

In sum, these are four of the key experiences that have been identified for successful second language learning: Learners must be given input that is made meaningful and comprehensible. They must pay attention to the form of the input as well as its meaning. They must produce the second language, and be given feedback in order to modify their production to-

ward greater comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy.

These dimensions of second language learning are important from a theoretical and empirical point of view. As will be elaborated throughout the sections that follow, they motivate and inform the current transition in language teaching methodology.

Transition and integration in English teaching methodology

As noted above, there are many communicative activities, materials, and instructional strategies that strive to bring learners opportunities to experience these four dimensions of successful language learning. However, communication, by nature, cannot address learners' needs completely, because it is focused primarily on the meaning of messages, rather than on the form that messages take. To draw learners' attention to the forms of messages that encode their meaning, and to do so with certainty, has thus become one of the foremost challenges to English teaching methodology. The urgency of this challenge has led the field into this time of transition.

This is where teaching strategies, activities, and materials drawn from traditional methods, when integrated into a communicative curriculum, can play a vital role in language learning. Those that seem especially relevant to learners' needs and goals for English language learning at this time are noted briefly below, and then discussed in the sections to follow.

The major teaching strategies to be described are direct instruction and correction, as they can be implemented to help learners acquire features in a second language that are difficult to access from simply listening to, or reading, its messages and texts, and from emphasizing message meaning without attention to message form. Among the features to be discussed, therefore, are rules of grammar and culture that bear such close resemblance to rules in students' native language that they fail to notice them in communicative input, or to rely on them to comprehend such input. Approaching these features through strategies more direct than communication is important because, when accuracy of these features makes little difference in their communication of message meaning, it is unlikely that students can obtain feedback from their listeners to guide them toward grammatical or sociolinguistic precision.

Also to be discussed below are several types of activities through which these teaching strategies can be implemented in the classroom. These include grammar decision-making, information exchange, dictogloss, and dictocomp tasks, which bear some resemblance to traditional activities such as grammar exercises, dictation, and recitation. What makes these three activities transitional, and therefore, distinct from their latter counterparts, however, is that they are designed to focus learners' attention on grammatical features and forms in relation to meaning, and in so doing, they also appear to guide students along the path of grammar learning.

Activities such as these, however, even when carried out among students as they work in small groups or pairs, cannot be accomplished with-

out the careful planning, input, and orchestration of teachers who are thoroughly involved in their students' language learning. To be discussed below, therefore is the transition in perception of the teacher's contribution to students' learning. This can be seen in a renewed respect for the central role of the teacher in designing and implementing activities, materials, and strategies for the language classroom. Also discussed, will be the renewed interest in the ways in which teachers can work to restore the importance of the student's native language, in planning classroom lessons, carrying out classroom activities, and facilitating language learning.

What is seen during this time of transition is not a shifting back and forth between communicative and traditional methodologies, but rather an integration of these two approaches. The following sections will therefore discuss this integration in more detail, beginning with principles and practices for the integration of communication, instruction, and correction, followed by those aimed toward the integration of teachers and their students as a resource toward students' success in language learning.

Integration of instruction, correction, and communication

Instruction, correction, and communication each plays a role in second language learning. Far more powerful an impact, however, can come through their integration in the classroom. For example, research has shown that grammar instruction and correction are particularly effective when they accompany opportunities for oral communication inside and outside the classroom. The grammar of those students who receive instruction and correction alone improves, of course, but not as much as those who engage in all three of these learning foci. (Montgomery & Eisenstein 1986, Spada 1987). In a foreign language environment, with few opportunities for ongoing English communication outside the classroom, it is even more important for teachers to maintain a balance among communication, instruction, and correction.

In prior years, when attention was given to instruction and correction, this was largely on the basis of textbook writers' ideas of how this should be done. This was actualized in a number of ways. Sometimes, for example, the ideas came from principles from linguistics, and other times from education. Here, the importance and degree of difficulty of a rule could be the determinant of its order of instruction and attention to correction. Sometimes the ideas came from particular methods, especially those that stressed rule practice and application. Sometimes they were effective in assisting grammar development, but many other times, they were not. Students and teachers became frustrated in their efforts.

Fortunately, research on language learning has uncovered a good deal about the scope and sequence of grammar learning, and the role of instruction and correction in this activity. Numerous researchers have contributed to this effort. Although both communication AND instruction with correction are vital to language learning, we can now identify fairly confi-

dently which dimensions of a second language can be learned through an emphasis on communication and which respond better to an emphasis on instruction and correction. This is expressed in the following guidelines, which themselves are based on reviews by Harley (1993), Lightbown and Spada (1993), Pica (1994).

Guidelines for grammar instruction and correction: target features

Current guidelines for grammar instruction and correction indicate that learners need instruction and correction for features in a second language with any or all of the following characteristics: 1. They closely resemble features in the learner's native language. 2. They are (nearly or totally) imperceptible to the learner. 3. They occur infrequently in the input available to the learner. 4. They have complex morphosyntax.

What these features have in common is that they are difficult for learners to notice in the input available to them. As a result, learners find additional difficulty in making comparisons between such features as they occur in input with their own versions of such features as they produce them. This difficulty in noticing and comparing can, in turn, impede their second language development unless given feedback, with opportunities to respond through modified production.

These are the very features, therefore, which can make second language learning through communication such a challenging task, and call for an approach through which communication can be integrated with instruction and correction. Examples of such features and the difficulties they pose for learners are provided below. Suggestions for integrative activities are provided in a later section. The discussion begins with reference to difficulties of particular relevance to Chinese speakers learning English.

Chinese-English resemblance: Word order

Chinese and English are quite distant from each other in their grammatical systems. Nevertheless, researchers have identified a number of areas that are of individual and collective relevance here. (See, for example, Swan and Smith 1987, Wu 1995). One area is English word order, which is like Chinese word order of subject-verb-object (SVO) for its statements, but not for its questions, where inversion is applied to sentence subject and finite verb. Thus, in English, She is coming to Taiwan becomes Is she coming to Taiwan?

Question word order in English grammar may be even more challenging for Chinese speakers because English questions follow SVO order in certain contexts, but not in all of them. One context that can arise frequently during communication with learners reflects the listener's need for clarification or confirmation of the learner's utterance. Such a need is often encoded through what are known as echoic questions, such as She's going to Taiwan? or She's going where?. Learners are exposed to such SVO ques-

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tions all the time when they are engaged in communicative interaction in which message clarity and comprehensibility are vital to its transmission. Hearing such question types draws their attention further to SVO sentence structure in English, but provides them with limited access to inversion structures for English questions.

Learners need to be able to distinguish SVO and inverted question forms and their form-meaning relationships in input available to them, and to use question forms appropriately in their production. Yet the complexity of English question forms and their frequent encoding through SVO word order, suggest that learning to form English questions may require more than communication alone. Since SVO is what learners WOULD use in Chinese, and what they COULD use in English, they might not be able to advance beyond such communicative, pragmatic use of English unless the differences between Chinese and English in their speech and writing were pointed out to them.

Imperceptibility: Verb endings

Another challenge in grammar learning can be found in English verb endings. Here, Chinese native speakers, not unlike other English language learners, are confronted with imperceptibility as well as a diminution in communicative value when English verbs appear in redundant contexts. Most verb endings in English are reduced, unstressed, and/or elided. Many are voiceless and therefore difficult to hear in spoken English. They often go unnoticed in either spoken or written input, because they are not necessary for comprehension. As such, they are redundant with other linguistic or situational aspects of context, and require greater highlighting for the learner, the kinds of highlighting that instruction and correction can provide.

An illustrative example can be found in English consonant clusters (-ks, -kt). These are particularly sensitive to Chinese influence when they are in the final position of English words and syllables because Chinese has no consonant clusters in the final position of syllables. As a result, learners might learn to say lai or like instead of likes and liked, unless instructed or assisted to do otherwise. (See Pica 1994 and Sato, 1984 for further details).

Even structures that have clear relationships of form and function can be difficult for learners to recognize on their own because they appear at the ends of words, often in reduced or voiceless forms. Among these are plural -s and progressive -ing. Such features can be learned far more quickly if the learners' attention is drawn to them through instruction. (Pica 1985).

Guidelines for grammar instruction and correction: implementation

So far, this discussion of guidelines has addressed their application to the identification of target features on which to focus instruction and cor-

rection. Further needed, of course are guidelines for implementing such instruction and correction. Again research has shed light on this topic. And again, research has shown consistently that the most effective instruction is that in which meaningful communication is emphasized as well. (Brock, Crookes, Day, & Long, 1986, Day and Shapson 1991, Harley 1989, Lightbown & Spada 1990, Lightbown, Spada & Ranta 1991, White 1990, 1991). Recent research has provided a basis for the following guidelines regarding the implementation of grammar and correction in the classroom.

1. Effective activities for grammar learning focus learners' attention on second language form in relation to message meaning

In the case of verb tenses, for example, it is important that they be pointed out to learners as often as possible, whenever they appear in texts or spoken discourse, for example. Texts can be specially created to highlight the use of these forms in context. As such, the texts might center around stories, histories, world events. Indeed any text would be helpful if it provided at least one category of verb contrast. Even better would be an activity that involved all modalities, from reading the text, and/or listening to the text, taking notes on it, and reporting it back to other class members. (See, for example, Genesee 1994).

2. Effective activities for grammar learning focus learners' attention on one error at a time

Research has shown that teachers' reduced repetitions of students' errors, with emphasis on the error itself, were more highly associated with learners' correct responses than were expansions or elaborations of learners' utterances or isolated suppliance of a correct form. (Chaudron 1977). Thus, simple, short feedback that highlights one error at a time appears to be more effective than a complete overhaul of the learner's message. This should not imply that teachers imitate students' production, save for correction of only one error. Rather, it suggests that teachers continue to use target varieties of the second language, but draw attention to only one feature at a time, for example, verb tense contrasts. Thus the teacher can first offer a completely accurate version of the students' entire message, then segment one particular word or phrase, and draw the learner's attention to that.

3. Effective activities for grammar learning are provided when learners are ready to learn

One of the earliest claims to emerge from second language research was that learners' errors reflected their hypotheses about the language they were learning. This is a claim that continues to be held widely to date. Thus, instruction or correction cannot alter the path of language learning.

However research has shown that instruction and correction can accelerate the learners' movement and progress along the path, if provided at a time that is developmentally appropriate.

When helping students to form English sentences, therefore, what must be kept in mind is that sentence construction is acquired in an order of increasing complexity, with simple statements before questions, and copular yes-no questions before lexical yes-no questions before wh-questions. This was found in research such as that of Pienemann (1984; see also Lightbown and Spada 1993). If this is not the order of instruction in student textbooks, therefore, the students cannot expect be expected to be ready to internalize sentence grammar with strict accuracy. (Ellis 1989, Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann 1981). The best that teachers can hope for is that the students have been alerted to the more complex structures so that they can begin to *recognize* them. However, the students cannot be expected to use these complex structures correctly until they have gained at least some control over the simpler ones.

4. Effective activities for grammar learning let learners know they are being corrected

This is not always possible in the height of a communicative activity, but hearing a corrected version immediately following what learners have just said helps them "notice the gap" between their production and the correct second language version. (Doughty & Varella in press, Schmidt 1990, 1992, Schmidt & Frota 1986).

In one of these studies, for example, it was found that students whose teacher provided immediate corrective feedback on one particular error (substitution of have for be) during communicative activities, were able to overcome the error and sustain correct production well beyond their period of instruction. However, those students who were corrected during audiolingual drill and practice activities were able to self-correct, but could not sustain such correction beyond the classroom. (Lightbown 1991).

5. Effective activities for grammar learning integrate instruction with correction

An innovative practice that incorporates traditional methods with newer views of second language learning that focus on attention and awareness of language structures is the "garden path" technique. In studies on foreign language classrooms, it has been shown that learners who participated in the "garden path" technique of sequencing instruction on grammar rules then exceptions were more successful at learning the rules than those who were taught rules and exceptions at the same time.

Thus, in one study on the "garden path" technique, learners were first taught only regular forms of verb structures. Then they practiced on exercises for both regular and irregular structures. This activity led them to produce typical errors of overgeneralization as they applied the rule for

regular verbs to irregular verbs. The teacher then gave immediate feedback on their errors and instruction on the exception. This feedback called the students' attention to the difference between regular and irregular verbs in ways that instruction alone had been less effective in doing. As a result, students were able to make more rapid progress in their verb learning. (See Tomasello and Herron 1988, 1989 for further details).

6. Effective activities for grammar learning can sustain the effects of instruction and correction through target feature models and metalinguistic information

Traditional strategies such as modeling, imitation, and practice are also useful for second language learning and use. This is because we know that learners are able to communicate within the current developmental state of their own grammar. This gives them an opportunity to avoid words and grammatical structures not yet under their control. When asked to imitate a model, however, they have to reconstruct the grammar & meaning of what they hear and attempt production of new structures not quite within their current capacity. (Eisenstein, Bailey, & Madden 1983).

A similar finding has held for Chinese language learning by native English speakers. In a recent investigation, students who were studying measure words were given one of several different correction strategies whenever they made a mistake. These included suppliance of models, provision of metalinguistic information and rules, comments, and explicit rejection. The only significant effects on production were shown for models and metalinguistic information. Simply informing students when they were wrong, or leaving the error unattended, to develop into a target feature on its own, was shown to be far less effective than these more instructional techniques. (See Chen 1996 for more details, and Lightbown and Spada 1993 for review).

What research has suggested is that even when there is a need to isolate a particular structure for attention, it is also important not simply to teach rules and drill sentences, but to present the second language structure in context and discuss it with students, using their native language, if possible and necessary, to do so. This is so that learners can take advantage of their metalinguistic capacity and their ability to think about language and to understand its intricacies.

7. Instruction and correction can be effective in guiding learners to acquire sociolinguistic rules

The above guidelines for instruction and correction apply to other structures that have multiple form-function relationships. Of particular importance are those that depend on context and interlocutor roles and relationships for their accuracy and appropriateness. Among these are sociolinguistic rules, formulas, and routines.

Research has revealed several strategies that build on learners' cogni-

tive skills for acquiring sociolinguistic rules in a second language. These include telling them what to say and why to say so, letting them practice in dialogues created by native speakers, and providing them opportunities to compare their own production with that of speakers of the second language. These are but a few of the ways in which learners can become aware of these difficult, but crucial features of English.

Recent studies have shown that instruction on social rules and formulas makes a difference in the rate and extent to which they are learned. (Billmyer 1990, Lyster 1994, Olshtain & Cohen 1990, Swain and Lapkin 1989). Also important to their growth is the opportunity to learn cultural information, which may be difficult to obtain in classroom input. It seems likely that role plays are helpful for communication, but they are not sufficient for learners to gain access to the norms of the native speakers. They develop their own interpretation of these rules if left to their own devices. Practice through dialogues that have been specially created for them may very well hold the key to this extremely challenging dimension of language learning, particularly in foreign language contexts.

Many teachers who are not native speakers of the language they are teaching are reluctant to teach sociolinguistic dimensions of the second language. The strategies noted throughout this section, with their emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of learning might allay some of such teachers' fears. Since sociolinguistic rules are generally so complex and difficult that a good deal of explanation and example is important for their learning, teachers need not feel that they must be native like in their use of sociolinguistic rules in order to be a resource for their students in this area. In addition, these more cognitive activities may be particularly attractive, as growing numbers of learners reject games and even discussion as too easy and easy-going (See Futaba 1994).

Many of these strategies have as much to do with second language learning as they do with communication. For example, learners need additional help with questions, especially confirmation checks and clarification requests. Such strategic moves as Did you say X? or Could you say that again? are effective ways of helping learners to have messages repeated and adjusted for comprehensibility. Research has shown that these useful strategies can be taught to students quite effectively, even when the instruction is provided by non-native speaker teachers. (See, for example, Dornyei 1995). The challenge to the teacher is centered both on the teaching and learning of the strategies as well as on creating a classroom environment where such strategies are welcome.

As the need for direct instruction and correction continues to grow, along with evidence that both are effective when used in a principled way, we see a transition in the conceptualization of relationships in participation between teachers and students and among students themselves in the classroom. As will be discussed in the next section, one consistent finding is that again, a principled integration of these different participation structures is critical for success in English learning.

Integration of classroom participation structures

Most teachers would agree that there is a need for communication that balances teacher-led instruction with group work and learner-to-learner, or peer, interaction. This observation has become even more important in the transition in language teaching methodology. Research has been especially revealing in this regard. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified in both group work and teacher-led instruction. These are identified next.

1. Communication with peers promotes authentic, purposeful second language use

Research has revealed that peer and group work enable students to use language more communicatively and across a broader range of functions than do lessons characterized by lock-step, teacher-led classroom interaction (Long et al. 1976). Learners are particularly helpful in using a technique known as scaffolding, in which, when working in pairs, one tends to complete each other's utterances when the other is struggling to find a word or expression to communicate a message. (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell 1995, 1996), as well as in supporting each other's answers even during teacher-fronted lessons. (See Tseng 1992).

2. Peer communication activities are effective in the short term

Research has shown that when working in pairs on a communication task, learners rarely incorporate each other's errors into their own production. Far more prevalent are learners' self-corrections and modification of their own utterances into more complex forms (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell 1996), their self-generated adjustments toward more correct production (Bruton & Samuda, 1980) and their incorporation of each others' *correct* productions (Gass & Varonis 1990). Thus, in the immediate term, peer and group work do not handicap correct production, indeed they can greatly assist it. However, when looking at long range goals for learners, peer and group activities appear to be less effective in that regard, particularly for mastery of grammar and pronunciation. This will be discussed below.

3. Peer communication activities are not sufficient for meeting learner goals toward second language mastery

In the long run, it has been found that students who engage in extensive student-to-student interaction, without the benefit of much direct interaction with their teacher, develop fluent, but non-target like production, this is largely because the input they receive from peer learners reinforces their own errors and misanalyses of the target language. (Lightbown & Spada 1990, Plann 1977, White 1990, Wong Fillmore 1992).

Further, not all students working with peers have been found to take advantage of the opportunity to speak. In fact, they are often prevented from doing so by more assertive group members (Pica and Doughty 1985). In addition, group work has been found to assist certain language skills more than others. Listening comprehension, in particular, appears to be greatly facilitated in that regard (See Bejarano 1987 for further details). Such findings suggest that other approaches are required to insure language proficiency.

There are several classroom tasks that are particularly effective in guiding grammar learning through peer and teacher integration. Most are reminiscent of traditional activities such as grammar exercises, dictation, and recitation, and thus integrate traditional concerns for grammar instruction with the communicative technique of group work. Among them are tasks in grammar decision making and information exchange, and the dictogloss and dictocomp tasks, to be described next.

Integration of tradition and transition through grammar focused tasks

Grammar decision making tasks

In grammar decision making activities, actual grammar exercises can be given to students to work out together and report to their classmates. Here, students are asked to complete fill in the blanks or multiple choice exercises, selecting among verb tense or aspectual features, for example, explaining choices to their teacher, to each other, and to their classmates. Research has shown that such tasks are very simple to locate, adapt, or devise, and yet can have powerful impact on students' grammar learning over time (See Fotos and Ellis 1991).

Information exchange tasks

Known popularly as jig-saw tasks, these communication activities are characterized by a format that adheres to the following two conditions: Each student is given a portion of the information needed to carry out the task, and is required to exchange this information with the other students in order to complete the task successfully. (See Doughty and Pica 1986 and Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun 1992 for review of these and other tasks which belong to different task types). Such tasks thus provide a potential context for learners to focus their attention on the form and meaning of the messages, as message providers and as message comprehenders. There are two main types of these information exchange tasks that seem to work well. One task involves communication through visual description, the other involves communication through story telling.

In a description task, learners are asked to draw or describe pictures or other visuals, and describe them to peers who themselves must draw them on the basis of the learners' verbal description. Maps, diagrams, charts, nearly any visual can be used. Learners who are reluctant to draw can be

asked to assemble or even locate the visual being described.

In a picture story task, learners must compose a single story by exchanging information on their own individually held pictures of the story, the full sequence of which is kept hidden from their view until the end of the task. After they have assembled the pictures in a way that they believe reflects the story, they are allowed to see the hidden sequence of pictures, and judge their success.

One story that has been used successfully in both research and classroom contexts, consists of pictures depicting a woman who was getting ready to begin cooking at her gas stove. She had turned on the gas and was about to light a match to ignite the gas, when she was interrupted by a surprise visitor. She then proceeded to answer her door and sat down to a conversation with an unexpected guest. However, in so doing, she forgot to turn off the stove. When the guest lit a cigarette, this was followed by a small explosion in the woman's home. This story lends itself to contrasts in time and activity as well as foregrounding and backgrounding of information. It is thus excellent for drawing learners' attention to verb forms as they try to work out the story together.

Each of these types of information exchange tasks, with their different grammatical emphases enables students to produce a broad range of input, feedback, and output modifications during their exchange of information. The visual description task engages learners in describing attributes, states and conditions in their pictures. Such description guides them to focus on the names and features of objects, individuals, and contexts. The story telling task, on the other hand, with its emphasis on a sequence of events, leads them to focus on verb inflections for actions and experiences, with reference to time sequences and foreground-background relationships among the story events.

Dictogloss and dictocomp tasks

The dictogloss and dictocomp resemble traditional lecture/text reading, presentation and dictation exercises, but build on them in the following ways: First, the teacher provides a lecture or brief passage that has been adapted to emphasize a particular structure or structure contrast, say verb tenses, noun number or sentence vs. question construction. This structure can be pointed out to the students before they undertake the task. During the dictation or text reading, students take notes on an individual basis, then work in teams, using their notes to reconstruct the text for a follow up presentation in oral or written form. (See Nunan 1989, Swain 1995, Swain 1993, and Wajnryb 1994 for further discussion). Research on students as they work through dictogloss and dictocomp tasks has revealed that they discuss grammatical features as well as rules for accuracy. This is especially so when after the reconstruction, the groups get together to compare versions with each other and with the original version given them by

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their teacher.

The dictogloss and dictocomp are of particular interest in bringing together the traditional and transitional dimensions of language teaching methodology. This is because they strike a balance between the more traditional teacher-led instruction and the sorts of group work that have been promoted in communicative approaches. As concerns for achieving a balance between teacher led instruction and peer work, continue to mount in language teaching methodology, there is also renewed interest in the contributions teachers can make toward using students' native language to guide their learning. This will be addressed in the following section.

Integration of second language and native languages as learning resources

Research has shown that teachers can work to restore the importance of the student's native language, in planning classroom lessons, carrying out classroom activities, and facilitating language learning. These are based largely on the work of Polio and Duff (1994) and Sticchi-Damiani (1983). It is important to note that the research does not suggest a return to translation as an all encompassing strategy for language teaching, but rather as a helpful dimension of learners' and teachers' communicative competence.

The main contributions are in the following areas, including **1. Management**: in order to explain rules and help students to understand their errors, to provide clear directions for assignments both in and out of the classroom. **2. Guidance**: in order to let students ask questions, again to achieve as much clarity as possible of both the second language as well as tasks and assignments. **3. Clarification:** to assist comprehension of word meaning and complex sociolinguistic rules. **4. Preparation:** to provide prereading context so that students can apply their knowledge and experience to an assignment. **5. Rapport building:** to develop and insure solidarity and rapport among students and between students and their teacher. **6. Anxiety reduction:** to avoid emotional interference with language learning.

It is important, of course, for learners to be able to blend such strategic use of the native language with strategic use of the second language. This latter must be applied to aid comprehension through use of contextual cues, reliance on prior learning, and asking clarification questions. The native language can serve as a bridge, and a very useful one at that. However, as students are aiming toward second language learning, and will eventually communicate with English language users who do not know their native language, it is critical for them to learn strategies for exploiting the second language in their language learning process.

Conclusion

Today, in English language teaching, tradition and transition are not proceeding separately, with each meeting some dimension of language

learning on its own. Instead, tradition and transition are becoming integrated into fresh and original approaches which can be very helpful to teachers and students. Of utmost importance to this integrated approach is that the classroom become an environment for learning through communication, for learning to communicate, and for learning to learn effectively and efficiently.

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